

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-7 and 9-33, without prejudice or disclaimer, amend the claims as follows and add new claims 34-52:

1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method for operating a virtual shopping mall by using a computer system, the computer system being established on a plurality of chain stores which are chained in advance to one another to form a physical distribution system, each of said chain stores including a terminal base unit for registering virtual goods information including an image, said terminal base units being connectable to the virtual shopping mall by a communication line, said method comprising:

registering virtual goods information, which corresponds to a seller's real goods, from one of said terminal base units provided in one of said chain stores to the virtual shopping mall after receiving said virtual goods information from said seller, said registering virtual goods information including the image of said real goods as a part of said virtual goods information;

intermediating business between said seller and a buyer on said virtual shopping mall by presenting said virtual goods information to the buyer;

setting a delivery path on the physical distribution system for delivering said real goods from said seller to said buyer in accordance with said buyer's selection of a terminal base from which said buyer receives said real goods;

establishing trading between said buyer and said seller, which achieves business on said virtual shopping mall; and

~~The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:~~

setting a maximum value of a number of categories of virtual goods, which can be displayed on said virtual shopping mall, according to a fee charged to said seller.

9-33. (Cancelled)

34. (New) A shop terminal base unit for registering a commercial goods in a virtual shopping mall which is operated by a virtual shopping mall operation apparatus on an Internet, the shop terminal base unit being provided at one of real stores which are chained to one another and form a physical distribution system, comprising:

a display device which display a predetermined screen page,

a capturing apparatus which obtains an image data of the goods to be registered in the virtual shopping mall,

an input unit which inputs goods information by a seller in accordance with the predetermined screen page displayed in the display device,

a virtual goods information generating unit which generates virtual goods information based on the image data of the goods captured by the capturing apparatus and the goods information inputted by the input unit, and

a commercial goods registration processing unit which registers the virtual goods information generated by said virtual goods information generating unit in the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus.

35. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, wherein said display device includes a touch panel type display screen and preferably said input unit includes a touch pen for the touch panel type display screen.

36. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, wherein said capturing device includes at least one of a digital camera and a scanner.

37. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising a media drive for reading out the goods information from a recording medium in which the goods information is stored in advance.

38. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising an owner registration processing unit which registers information of the seller in the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus, said information of the seller being inputted by the seller via said input unit in accordance with a predetermined screen page displayed in said display device.

39. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 38, wherein said information of the seller includes at least one of a telephone number, an address and an e-mail address of the seller.

40. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 38, further comprising a fee processing unit which demands an owner registration fee for the seller upon receipt of a notification from the shopping mall operation apparatus that the information of the seller has been registered in the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus.

41. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 40, wherein said fee processing unit includes a slot for inserting and returning coins and bills for paying the owner registration fee.

42. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising a commercial goods searching unit which communicates with the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus and obtains virtual goods information in relation to at least one of a keyword and a price which are inputted by the input device in accordance with a predetermined screen page displayed in said display device.

43. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising a commercial goods purchase processing unit which transmits into the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus information of the real shop where the goods to be delivered,

the information of the real shop where the goods to be delivered being inputted by a buyer via the input device in accordance with a predetermined screen page displayed in said display device.

44. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 43, wherein said commercial goods purchase processing unit registers information of the buyer in the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus and notifies an order of the goods by the buyer to the seller via the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus.

45. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 44, wherein the information of the buyer includes at least one of a telephone number and an e-mail address of the buyer.

46. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a real goods receiving managing unit which obtains from the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus the information of the real shop where the goods to be delivered when a trade ID is inputted via said input unit, the trade ID being issued by the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus when a trade between the seller and the buyer is reached.

47. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 46, wherein said real goods receiving managing unit notifies information about an arrival of the goods into the

buyer via the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus when the goods has been delivered to the real shop.

48. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 47, wherein the information about the arrival of the goods includes a trade ID which is relating to the information of the buyer.

49. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising:
a printer; and
a catalog printing unit which prints out catalogs of the virtual goods information via said printer.

50. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising an original shop site creating unit for creating an original site on the shopping mall.

51. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 34, further comprising a fee processing unit which demands a fee of the goods for a buyer when a trade ID of the buyer is inputted via the input unit and which pays the fee of the goods to the seller when a trade ID of the seller is inputted via the input unit, wherein both the trade ID of the buyer and the trade ID of the seller are issued by the virtual shopping mall operation apparatus if a trade between the seller and the buyer is reached.

52. (New) The shop terminal base unit as claimed in claim 51, wherein said fee processing unit includes a slot for inserting and returning coins and bills for paying the owner registration fee.